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Protest to greet CIA recruiters

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BOULDER — A group opposed to the planned November presence of CIA recruiters at the University of Colorado may demonstrate more vigorously than during a spring protest that saw 478 people arrested.

How vigorous that protest is will depend on the university's response to a petition calling for the formation of a board to establish principles with regard to recruiting at CU. "Let us define what is acceptable and what is not," said Gonzalo Santos, a CU staff member, at a press conference this morning.

The CIA is planning a one-day visit to CU on Nov. 18.

The group, Community in Action, expects thousands of signatures on the petition asking for the creation of this panel, said Kevin Harris, a CU student. The board would formulate a set of "ethical principles to govern the use of (university) facilities by external agencies for purposes of recruitment," he said.

If the university rejects this proposal, which will be presented to it in early November, Harris said the group would respond accordingly.

In a letter to CU President Gordon Gee, the group said: "The character of our protest will be massive, principled and disciplined, but its level of intensity will be directly tied to your response to our petition." The letter said if the petition is ignored, "we will have no choice but to intensify our protest."

The group said the letter was delivered to Gee's office this morning.

The hundreds arrested last spring were charged with interfering with the operation of an educational institution. They were attempting to make citizens' arrests of the CIA recruiters, charging the recruiters were on campus representing an agency that sponsors genocide in Nicaragua.

Boulder County District Attorney Alex Hunter dropped the charges against the 478 arrested. He accused the protesters of attempting to manipulate the criminal justice system.

"They did not dare test our claims in court," countered Santos this morning. "We demanded them to take us to court."

Harris said he viewed it as a victory that the CIA has limited its presence at CU to one day, instead of the four days it was on campus in the spring. He believes the request for a review board is a reasonable one.

"We will bind ourselves to the decision of the panel," he said. "We have faith in those who would serve. We would allow the council to select its own members."

Harris hopes students would be allowed to sit on the panel. They should be chosen by the student government, he said.

The board's recommendations would apply to all recruiters and not just the CIA.

The group believes the university bears a moral responsibility not to cooperate with the CIA.